



# Network News

Your Arizona Parent School Connection

Arizona Department of Education



Tom Horne,  
Superintendent of  
Public Instruction

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## Mark Your Calendar!

by Jessie Geroux

The New Year is upon us and with it comes several opportunities to attend some exciting events. There are information fairs and training opportunities available statewide. We have highlighted two statewide events and provided Internet websites and phone numbers for more information.



### 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Legislative Awareness Day

February 6, 2008, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

As the 2008 Legislative Session moves into full swing, join the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities at their 19th Annual Legislative Awareness Day on the lawn of the State Capitol. Exhibit booths and presenters will be on hand with information regarding important policy issues that may impact the lives of individuals with disabilities. This is a unique chance to interact with Legislators. For more information, please visit their website at [www.azgcd.org](http://www.azgcd.org) or call 866-771-9378 – Toll Free.

### Disability Expo

February 20, 2008, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

If a dynamic keynote speaker, awards ceremony, theater performances, or the chance to visit with over 100 exhibitors interests you, plan to attend the annual AZ Disability Expo at the Phoenix Convention Center, 33 South Third Street, Hall E. The theme for this year is *Your life, Your community, Your future*. The keynote speaker is Paul "Doug" Goddard. For more information and to see a list of workshops and exhibitors, visit their website at [www.azdx.com](http://www.azdx.com) or call 602-470-1802, x114.



### Enhancing Arizona's Parent Networks (EAPN) Calendar of Events

Check out the EAPN calendar, [www.azeapn.org](http://www.azeapn.org), for parent involvement activities, special education trainings, support groups, or informational workshops. Over 50 disability-related organizations add their events throughout the year to this Internet calendar. This is a great website to bookmark and check on a monthly basis.

## Spotlight on PIN Trainings

by Teri Rademacher

### Autism Spectrum Disorder

The Parent Information Network (PIN) is pleased to announce two new trainings. In an effort to be responsive to the needs of those we serve, the PIN has developed a training which provides an overview of the characteristics of autism spectrum disorders (ASD). The title of the training is *Autism Spectrum Disorder, Success: One Piece at a Time*. This two hour training outlines teaching, behavior and classroom management strategies.



Some of the many characteristics of ASD explored in the training include sensory integration, mindblindness, motor skills, and anxiety. Coping and managing the anxiety level of children with ASD is often the most challenging for families and educators. This training offers some practical strategies for decreasing that anxiety level.

One of the strategies outlined in detail is the use of Social Stories. This technique is a very effective tool which can be used both at home and at school. The visual support of the "storybook" coupled with verbal reinforcement serves to prepare the child for changes in routine and/or activity. Social Stories are also an effective tool to use when working to elicit appropriate behaviors in specific settings.

A unique piece to this training is the celebration of the exceptional characteristics of children with ASD. It reminds us to identify and applaud those wonderful traits that are specific to children with ASD. For more information or to schedule this training, contact your regional PIN Specialist listed on page 4 or call our toll free number at 877-230-PINS (7467).

### Disability Categories

Students at colleges and universities across Arizona as well as both regular and special education teachers and staff have found the next PIN training very helpful. The *Disability Categories under IDEA* training is interactive and describes all 13 disability categories under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004. Each category is discussed and an overview provided with supportive print resources. Hands-on disability simulations are available for all 13 categories and can be tailored to fit the desired length and depth of the training.

The training contains an overview, based upon IDEA 2004, of each category and the associated characteristics. It also provides the participants with a snapshot of how those qualities might impact a child. Strategies for managing, changing, and/or adapting some of those unique behaviors are provided. For example, following the overview of the Emotional Disability category, the trainings speaks to the need for behavior modification and what that process might look like.

State statistics marking the incidence rate of each disability specific to Arizona are also provided. Resources available at the Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services are outlined in this training. For example, information about assistive technology and how families and educators can access that information and/or service is detailed in the presentation.

For more information about these trainings or to check out the comprehensive listing of trainings available through the PIN, please visit our website at [www.azed.gov/pinspals](http://www.azed.gov/pinspals), contact your regional PIN Specialist listed on page 4, or call toll-free 877-230-PINS (7467).

### To Accommodate or Not to Accommodate: That is the Question!

by Teri Rademacher



Questions regarding the use of accommodations on the Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) test have educators and parents searching for answers. Information and direction regarding this issue has flowed from various sources, from local newspaper articles to official memorandums from the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The federal government released an update to the regulations on April 9<sup>th</sup> of this year that specifically addresses the use of accommodations on state assessments.

The Federal Register Vol. 72, No. 67 states that decisions about whether a particular accommodation is or is not allowed depends on how a test is constructed and validated. States are required to ensure that their assessment is designed to be used by the widest possible number of students, and to ensure that accommodations are provided, when necessary, to measure the academic achievement of students with disabilities.

If the State were to permit schools to allow students to use non-standard accommodations while taking the AIMS test, it would render the student's score invalid. By definition, a non-standard (not regular) accommodation is not allowed because it alters the outcome of the test and provides the student an unfair advantage. When the Federal Register was amended in April of 2007, specifically §300.160 (b), part of the discussion included a reminder of the State's responsibility to ensure that all children with disabilities are included in State and district-wide assessments. It went on to say that the State's responsibility is two-fold—one to ensure that children with disabilities are included in the assessments and that the accommodations that

are offered are those which allow a child's academic achievement to be measured. Many educators believe that if you allow a child to use a non-standard accommodation; one that would yield an invalid score, then the results cannot be used to measure academic achievement.

The State Board of Education, with Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Horne, submitted a request to the United States Department of Education (USDOE) requesting that the use of calculators by students with disabilities be changed from a non-standard to a standard accommodation. Along with the request, the State provided the results of a scientific study conducted by Dr. Jerome V. D'Agostino, professor at the University of Arizona, regarding the impact of the use of calculators on the validity of the test. The State is awaiting a response from the USDOE.

Section 300.160(b) of the federal regulations already requires States to develop guidelines for Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams to use regarding appropriate accommodations. These guidelines are provided by the Arizona Department of Education and can be found online at [www.ade.state.az.us/standards/aims/Administering](http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/aims/Administering). The title of the document is *Testing Accommodations: Guidelines 2007-2008*. One critical reminder to IEP teams that can be found in this document is that "no accommodations should be provided during assessments that are not also provided during instruction." This guide also defines universal and standard accommodations, providing a list of those considered acceptable.

### Look What's New!

by Barb Ross

The Parent Information Network (PIN) is pleased to announce the new toll-free number dedicated to parents only! The Parent Information Network is always looking for new and innovative ways to support and empower parents to fully participate in the special education process. The new number will help route parent calls more efficiently and improve our response to parent requests. In addition, we will include a PIN Specialist of the Day (POD) who will be available for phone consultations from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 1-877-230-PINS (7467)!



It is with heavy hearts that the Parent Information Network has accepted the resignation of two fellow PINS, Kristie Melkers and Jessie Geroux. Thank you, Kristie and Jessie for your commitment to the Parent Information Network over the past few months and years. The impact each of you had in your regions was recognized and appreciated by the Arizona Department of Education/Exceptional Student Services, fellow PINS, families, educators, and agencies who, like you, have a passion to advocate for students with special needs. We wish you the very best in your new endeavors!

## Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS) and the IEP

by Barb Ross

Behavior is identified as how people act, function, and/or react in a particular situation. Children can have behaviors related to their disability that are considered inappropriate. When behaviors interfere with the child's or others ability to learn, a functional behavioral assessment can be used to examine the behavior(s) and develop a positive behavior plan to manage, replace, or eliminate the behavior. Children can be taught appropriate behavior skills once behaviors are analyzed and understood.

Once an inappropriate behavior or behaviors have been identified by the teacher, parent or Individual Education Program (IEP) team, a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) can be requested. Parents can contact a Parent Information Network Specialist (PINS) for the *Sample Letter: Functional Behavioral Assessment Request (SE14)*. This document provides information on FBAs and a guide on how parents can initiate a request. The Parent Information Network Clearinghouse (PINC) document *Functional Behavioral Assessment and Positive Interventions: What Parents Need to Know (BR22)* also offers good information on what to expect during this process.

As parents you are an important part of the process because you have valuable information about your child no one else on the team may have. Understanding the process will help you work more effectively with the rest of the team. Here are some helpful tips on preparing for and participating in this process.

After the FBA has been conducted, ask that the results be shared with you prior to the IEP meeting. Think about what information you have to help the team understand your child's behavior and help determine appropriate supports, and include your child whenever possible.

- Make a list of your family strengths and what kind of support your family may need to address the behavior(s) at home.
- Determine your child's level of participation in the process and develop a plan for him or her to have meaningful involvement.
- Review the child's past progress, and try to determine what worked and what did not work.
- Talk with related service providers, teachers, family members or community agencies who are involved with your child and see what information they can provide.
- Write down any questions you have about the evaluation or the process.

Take notes during the meeting and include names of everyone participating. If anyone is new to the meeting ask for their name and position.

- Share your vision for your child's future and his or her strengths.
- Ask the other team members to share their visions for a desirable future for your child.

- Ask any questions you have about the evaluation or any terms you don't understand.
- While talking about the evaluation and the results, ask if anyone disagrees with the results.
- Determine with the team if the results of the evaluation accurately reflect your child's behavior and current level of functional performance.
- Discuss all current levels of performance that need specially designed instruction.

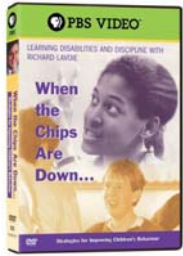


Once the FBA has been examined and a target behavior or behaviors identified, a positive Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) should be developed using observable and measurable descriptions of the behavior(s).

- Use descriptive words (i.e., kicking, hitting with hands, screaming, or throwing books).
- Do not use words that cannot be measured or observed (i.e., aggressive or frustrated).
- Give detailed conditions of where the behavior(s) most likely occur (i.e., recess, circle time, hallway, gym or restroom).
- Give detailed conditions of when the behavior(s) occur (i.e., before music, during lunch, after eating, during math, etc.)
- Also provide information about who is around when the behaviors occur (i.e., teachers, paraprofessionals, or peers).
- At least two objectives should be written for every problem behavior or more when appropriate.
  - ❖ One objective to decrease the problem behavior.
  - ❖ One objective to increase new replacement behavior.
- List criteria to measure success and include frequency, response, and duration.
- Develop a timeline for implementation and monitoring progress.
- Determine who will be collecting data and when and include types of data collection and criteria for mastery of goals.
- Discuss with the IEP team ways to incorporate PBS into daily routines, teaching new skills, and ensuring rewards and consequences.
- Discuss with the IEP team any related services needed to ensure success (i.e., psychological services, social work services in school, parent counseling and training).
- Discuss with the IEP team if any supplementary aids or services are needed (i.e., room or seating arrangement, assistive technology, self-management skills, peer support, training for any or all members of the team).
- Discuss with the IEP team the least restrictive and most inclusive environment that will provide appropriate individualized instruction.

For more information on PBS contact a Parent Information Network Specialist by calling toll-free 877-230-PINS (7467) or visit the Positive Behavioral Supports and Interventions of Arizona website at [www.pbisaz.org](http://www.pbisaz.org).

## Learning Disabilities and Discipline: When the Chips are Down



One of the many resources available through the Parent Information Network (PIN) is the Free Media Lending Library. The library contains video and DVD presentations on various topics. Discipline is a popular category and one of the most requested titles is *When the Chips are Down... Strategies for Improving Children's Behavior* with Rick Lavoie.

This presentation provides viewers with techniques and strategies to use to resolve behavioral issues, and create a stable predictable environment in which children can thrive. Mr. Lavoie explores why some children engage in behaviors and provides clear examples of how to eliminate inappropriate behaviors while encouraging the development of more appropriate behaviors. This video presentation is appropriate for family members, school staff, service providers, and students. The video is 62 minutes in length and is produced by PBS Home Video. For more

information about Mr. Lavoie visit his website at [www.ricklavoie.com](http://www.ricklavoie.com).

The Free Media Lending Library catalog can be found online at [www.azed.gov/pinspals](http://www.azed.gov/pinspals). Just fill out the form on page 17 of the catalog, noting your request; mail or fax form to the PIN. Videos or DVDs can be checked out for two weeks. Please return promptly in the prepaid mailer provided.

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**For more information contact the PIN/Child Find Coordinator: Becky Raabe, (928) 679-8106, or [Becky.Raabe@azed.gov](mailto:Becky.Raabe@azed.gov).**

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